

Chapter No. 2066

19/SS36/R50

LR 1TB/RC

***SENATE  
CONCURRENT RESOLUTION  
No. 502***

Originated in Senate

Liz Welch

Secretary

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 502

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION COMMENDING AND CONGRATULATING THE 2017 EAST MISSISSIPPI COMMUNITY COLLEGE (EMCC) "LIONS" FOOTBALL TEAM AS THE FIRST NJCAA SCHOOL TO WIN A FOOTBALL NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP AND AN ACADEMIC NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP IN THE SAME YEAR, AND RECOGNIZING FIRST-YEAR ATHLETIC-ACADEMIC ADVISER ABBY JENKINS AND COACH BUDDY STEPHENS FOR THIS HIGH HONOR.

WHEREAS, the East Mississippi Community College "Lions" Football Team has received national recognition as "Last Chance U" for strengthening football players academically and winning championships; and

WHEREAS, in June 2018, East Mississippi Community College was named the National Junior College Athletic Association's "Football Academic Team of the Year" after posting a 3.01 composite grade point average. East Mississippi Community College became the first NJCAA school to win a Football National Championship and an Academic National Championship in the same year; and

WHEREAS, one of Abby Jenkins' first interactions as East Mississippi Community College's new Athletic-Academic Adviser in 2017 was a conversation she had with the football team during a

meeting. In the year before her arrival, the Lions were winners of 11 games and the Mississippi Bowl, further solidifying East Mississippi Community College's status as the National Junior College Athletic Association's premier program. Although the football credentials were impressive, Abby felt the team was capable of achieving academic milestones. During that meeting, she offered a challenge to the team: "You can be the National Champions on the field and in the classroom"; and

WHEREAS, Abby Jenkins' roots are near Scooba. She grew up in Neshoba County and graduated from Leake Academy in 2000 before earning a Bachelor's Degree from Mississippi College in 2004. After receiving a Master's Degree in Education in School Counseling from the University of West Alabama, she returned home to join the Philadelphia Public School District as a Counselor in 2009. Jenkins admits to watching Netflix's Blockbuster "Last Chance U" docu-series, and the interactions between former Athletic-Academic Advisor Brittany Wagner and her student-athletes appealed to her; and

WHEREAS, upon her arrival in Scooba, Abby was successful in getting more than 50 East Mississippi Community College football players in sync academically. For the Lions to be eligible for NJCAA academic honors consideration for the 2017-2018 academic year, the team had to raise its composite grade point average from 2.88 to the 3.0 threshold. Meeting with her students consumed a large part of Abby's day. She was tasked with arranging more than

150 student-athletes' class schedules, monitoring grades, serving as a liaison between players and coaches, and a number of additional academic support duties. Abby's time was not spent exclusively with players with academic issues, she also encouraged and challenged those students who were content with a "B" to strive toward achieving an "A." Despite the sweeping budget cuts across Mississippi's community college system in 2018, East Mississippi Community College Associate Dean of Instruction James Rush said the school's faculty coalesced around its students; and

WHEREAS, during Coach Buddy Stephens' tenure at Scooba, he has amassed 93 wins, has a career-winning percentage of .879, and is a four-time NJCAA National Champion. Suffice it to say that he has experienced his share of banner moments. "Winning a National Championship means a lot to our school, but winning an Academic National Championship, that is our teachers and our administration winning a National Championship. This is a testament to how hard our faculty and staff have worked, not only with our athletes but also with all of our students. You can't say enough about Abby Jenkins and how hard she worked on this," Stephens said. "For her to be named National Champion in her first year as the Academic Coach speaks volumes to the fantastic job Abby has done making sure that the football players are held accountable off the field and in the classroom"; and

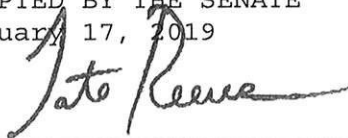
WHEREAS, it is with great pride that we recognize the academic excellence of the students, faculty and staff of a

Mississippi Athletic Program that has brought honor to East Mississippi Community College, its community, and to the State of Mississippi:

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING THEREIN, That we do hereby commend and congratulate the 2017 East Mississippi Community College (EMCC) "Lions" Football Team as the first NJCAA school to win a Football National Championship and an Academic National Championship in the same year, and recognize first-year Athletic-Academic Advisor Abby Jenkins and Coach Buddy Stephens for this high honor.

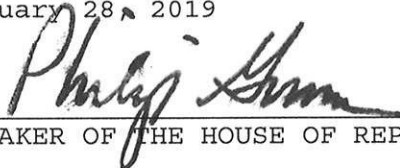
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That this resolution be presented to the EMCC "Lions" Football Team, Academic Advisor Abby Jenkins and Coach Buddy Stephens, forwarded to the Board of Trustees of East Mississippi Community College and the State Board for Community Colleges, and made available to the Capitol Press Corps.

ADOPTED BY THE SENATE  
January 17, 2019



PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE

ADOPTED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
January 28, 2019



SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES